

THE IVST MAN IN BONDS.

OR

ievt. Col. *John Lilburne* close Prisoner
in Newgate, by order of the H o u s e
of L O R D S.

SINCE this worthy gentle mans case is mine, and every mans, who though we be at liberty to day, may be in *Newgate* to morrow, if the *House of Lords* so please, doth it not equally and alike concerne all the people of *England* to lay it to hearr, and either fit both our minds and necks to undergoe this slavery, or otherwise thinke of some speedy and effectuall meanes to free our selves and our posterity there from.

This noble and resolute Gentleman *Mr. Lilburne*, then in his countrey has not a truer and more faithfull servant, hath broke the Ice for all, who being sensible that the people are in reall bondage to the *Lords* (and that Lawes and Statutes providing to the contrary, serving them in no stead) hath singlventured himselfe a Champion for his abused country men, nothing doubting but he shall thereby open the eyes, and awake the drowsie spirits of his fellow Commoners, or rather Slaves (as the case now stands) with them; and likewise animate representative body of the people, to make use of that power wherewith they are tied to free us, themselves, their and our posterities, from the *House of Lords* serious and ambitious usurpation.

Object. Some through ignorance, or poverty of spirit, may (peradventure) judge *Lilburne* a rash young man for his opposing himselfe against so mighty a streame or rent of worldly power, which the *Lords* now possesse. To such I answer, 1. That the *House of Lords*, is like a shallow, un-even water, more in noise then substance; If we could distinguish between what is theirs of right, and what by ineroachment, we should soone find that they have deckt themselves with the *Commoners* feathers, which being reassumed, they would appeare no better arrayed then our men, even equall by Law, inferior in uprightness, and honesty of conversation: should then find that they are but painted properties, Dragons, that our superstition and ignorance, their owne craft and impudence have erected, no naturall issues of, but the extuberances and mushrooms of Prerogative, the Wens of just government putting the body of the People to paine, as well as occasioning deformity, Sons request they are and usurpation, not of choice and election, intruded upon us by, not constituted by consent, not made by the people, from whom all power, and office that is just in this kingdome ought only to arise.

Mr. Lilburne opposing himselfe against this exorbitant and extra-judiciall power of

of the *Lords*, ought rather to be admired by us as a pitch of valour we are not yet arrived too, through the faintnesse of our spirits, and dotage upon our trades, ease, riches, and pleasures, then censured by us as rash or furious. He that dares scale the walls of an enemy, or venture himselfe upon the utmost of danger in the field, is not judged rash but a valiant man, unlesse by those low spirits that dares not doe as he hath done. Let us therefore rather blame our selves for want of fortitude, then accuse him, as having too much.

Consider I pray the great danger we are in, if the *Lords* thus presume to clap a *Commoner of England* in close prison, even now when the *Commons of England* are sitting in *Parliament*, who are put in trust, and enabled with power to protect the people from such bondage (yea and so suddainly after they have in effect declared, that they will doe it, in their Declaration of the 17. of *April* last) what injuries will not these *Lords* doe to us, when the *Parliament* is ended, and the people have none of their owne *Commons* nor *Trustees* to protect them, heare their cryes, nor redresse their grievances; What prison or dungeon will then be base enough, what punishment or torture great enough for them, that are not cowardish enough so to be slaves and bond-men? And so is not the last error, like to be worse then the first?

Death it selfe is more tollerable to a generous spirit, then close imprisonment, besides the continuall feares that such an inhumane practice brings with it, of private murder or poisoning, as there are manifold examples of such cruelties, of which *Overberies* was not one of the least who was poisoned in the *Tower*, and to salve our colour that wickednesse, it was strongly given out and avouched that he murdered himselfe, though afterwards divers were hang'd for it, and the Earle of *Somerset* and his Countesse hardly escaped. *Sir Richard Wiseman* was moped and stupified with his close imprisonment, and what mischiefes (of divers sorts) may be done to honest and faithfull *Mr. Lithburne* upon this renewed opportunitie by the *Lords* (as he had too much formerly by the *Bishops*, though contrary to all equitie and justice, yea and even to the *Lords* owne reparations which lately they voted and allotted to him) while he is now close prisoner in their owne hands, who know him to be their chiefest opposer in all their usurpations and encroachments upon the *Commoners* freedoms? doth it not concerne all the *Commons of England* to consider and prevent the same, especially their great and generall Counsell in *Parliament* assembled.

Lay to heart I beseech you O YEE HOUSE of COMMONS, that neither your selves nor your children can plead any immunitie or security from this cruelty and bondage of the *House of Lords*, if now yee be slack or negligent, but yee may justly expect and feele the smart thereof upon you and your posterity, as well as we upon us and ours, atleast after you are dissolved, and dismissed from your Authorisation. And is not this one of the maine points for which yee have put your selves, us, and so many of this Nation as stand in your defence, to the effusion and expence of so much blood and multitudes of estates?

If yee did intend to expose this Kingdome to the miseries of warre for no other ends but that one kind of Arbitrary government, *Star-chamber*, or *High Commission Power*, might be abolished, and others of these kinds established over us, why would yee not tell us in due time, that wee might have both spared our lives and estates, and not made so many souldiers, Widowes and fatherlesse to mourne at the *Parliament* gates, for the manifold wants occasioned by your service, and made us sooner like humble vassals, to present our selves like slaves upon our knees at the House of *Lords* Barre, and suffer our eares to be bored through with an aule, in testimony that wee are their bond-men for ever.

But if yee would either free your selves of this suspicion, or us of those just feares, shew your selves to be such worthies as doe truly deserve that title, by using this opportunity which God hath put into your hands, and making us free-men; being the same cause for which wee used and intrusted you; and as a present signe of your fidelity and magnanimitie, let your reall intentions in the generall appeare by the exactnesse and speedinesse of your delivering of this youtowne, and his Countie, into the faithfull servant Mr. Lilburn from prison with all due reparations.

Banish all base feares, for there be more with you then against you, and the justnesse of your cause will daylie increase both your number and power, for God is alwaies present where Justice is extant, and yee cannot but observe by manifold experiences he be not only loves and protects just men, but by his Almighty power so abaseth all their Enemies, that they shall flee before him and his, like the dust before the wind: If yee will but take example by the courage and justice of your owne Armies, and doe as they doe, doubtlesse the same God who hath prospered them will also prosper you, yea and be with you, in all your proceedings whilst yee are with him, but if yee forsake him, (by denying, selling, or delaying justice, contrary to your duties, Oaths, Covenants, Protestations, and declarations) he will also forsake you, as he hath in all ages (even his owne People for their injustice, sins, and abominations) and stirred up both forraigne and intestine enemies to revenge his just quarrell and true cause against them.

For more particular information, these ensuing lines will be a speciall meanes.

VPon the 22. of June 1645. the House of Lords sent an Order to the Keeper of Newgate, to bring Mr. Lilburn before them upon the 23. thereof at ten a clock, wherof he having notice that morning, wrote a letter to the said Keeper, declaring his just liberties and the House of Lords usurpation thereof, contrary to Magna Charta and other fundamentall Lawes of this, Kingdome and that he would not go to them willingly, but had appealed and petitioned to the House of Commons, and therefore he desired the Keeper to take heed what he did, lest he could not recall any violent action, nor grounded upon Law.

And after Mr. Lilburn had sent the said letter by his wife, together with the printed copy of his protestation against the House of Lords illegal proceedings against him as Commoner, & his appeal & Petition to the House of Commons: as his competent Judges, but she not finding the Keeper at Newgate prison, nor at his owne house, at the hour of his appearance before the House of Lords near approaching, she delivered the same to the Sheriffs of London, being then in Guild-hall at the Court of Aldermen, where doubtles both the said letter and book were read, and as Sheriffe Foote informed her, that they sent a messenger to Newgate with their answer, what it was, is not yet knowne.

But if it came at all, it was not in due time, for after the deputy Keeper and his assistants had attended halfe an hour for Mr. Lilburns coming from his chamber to go with them before the House of Lords at the time appointed, and upon his constant refusing to go willingly with them (or so much as to open his Chamber doore, but shut it in token of his constant opposing so unjust a power over him a borne English man) and before the messenger whom he sent to Guild-hall with their consent, had returned with an answer (and whose returning they promised to attend) [they brake open his doore, tooke him away to Westminster] and no messenger was sent (who yet wee have heard of) from the Court of Aldermen.

When they had brought him to the painted chamber next the House of Lords

doore; where he attended with his Keepers almost two houres before he was in, (as it seemeth) the House of Lords servants and attendants, taking notice of the intercourse of Parliament men and others speaking to him told masters thereof, and lest their usurpation of the Commons liberties, his just cause should be manifested as well by word, as by writing, the Lords did his Keepers and commanded them that they should speedily charge him to have peace, and speake with none at all; but to be altogether silent untill he was called before them to answer their interrogatories.

Unto whom he returned this answer, and bad them tell the same to the House of Lords who sent them, that he would not hold his peace, but speak with any who in the way of love spake to him, so long as he had his tongue, except the Lords should put a gag into his mouth as their Fellow Lords the Bishops did to him 8 years agoe, on the Pillory at Westminster, after they had caused him to be whipt in the Fleet prison thither, and after he had told them their spirituall usurpation, it doth these Lords their temporall encroachments on free mens liberties.

Then he being called into the House of Lords, was commanded by their keepers the Black Rod to kneele before them, which he absolutely refused to doe, and at their still urging, and his constant refusing, they asked him the reason, he answered that he had learned both better Religion and manners then to kneele to any humane or mortall power how great so ever, whom he never offended, and far lesse to them whom he had defended with the adventure both of his life and estate, yea and with the friends he could make: whereupon they not only returned him to Newgate prison but commanded him to be kept close Prisoner, as appeareth by these ensuing orders.

Die Lunæ 22. Junij 1646.

Ordered by the Lords in Parliament assembled, that Lieut. Col. John Lilburne now prisoner in Newgate, shall be brought before their Lordships in the [High Court of PARLIAMENT] to morrow morning by ten of the clock: And this to be a sufficient warrant in that behalf.

To the Gent. Usher of this House, or his Deputy,
to be delivered to the Keeper of Newgate or his Deputy.

Ioh. Brown Cler.
Parliamentorum

Die Martis 23. Junij. 1646.

Ordered by the LORDS in PARLIAMENT assembled, that Iohn Lilburne shall be committed close prisoner in the Prison of Newgate; and that he be not permitted to buy pen, ink, or paper; and none shall have access unto him in any kind, but only his Keepers untill this Court doth take further order.

To the Keeper of Newgate his
deputy or deputies.

Ioh. Brown Cleric. Parliamentorum
Exam. per. Rec. Bristoe Cleric. de Newgate,

FINIS.

